



MEDIA RELEASE

13 July 2004

Closing a gap for mental health patients

People living with co-existing mental health and substance use problems will benefit from a new pilot program with Mental Health and Drug Health Services at South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) working together to provide the best outcomes for patients.

The *Dual Diagnosis Program* aims to close the gap for patients accessing both mental health and drug treatment services by developing combined care programs.

People affected by a dual diagnosis are suffering from two medical conditions and generally have poorer outcomes than those with a single diagnosis.

The program will operate within existing mental health and drug health services in Liverpool and Fairfield.

A forum will be held on 28 July 2004 for consumers to contribute to these services and the proposed program.

SWSAHS consumer consultant Ms Gwen Scotman said mental health consumers, drug health service users, families and carers of all ages had a vital contribution to make in guiding the direction and priorities of the program.

"The viewpoints of indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities are also important to us," said Ms Scotman.

The forum will be an opportunity for consumers to have input into how we develop the program and we look forward to their involvement

The forum will be held in the Auditorium, Thomas & Rachel Moore Education Centre, Liverpool Hospital, Cnr Goulburn & Elizabeth Streets, Liverpool on Wednesday 28 July from 3 – 6pm. To register phone Narelle Heywood, Mental Health consumer coordinator on 9828 4574 or 8778 0700.

Issued by South Western Sydney Area Health Service Public Affairs 9828 6848.